

Jeremiah 1

Have you face a tough assignment before like a task from work? Have you face a tough assignment from God before? We will study the prophet Jeremiah and his assignment. Then you can evaluate did you have the same response as Jeremiah accepted his assignment? You can learn how God guided him through the process, and apply that to your future cases.

Prophet Jeremiah's ministry is about 40 years (627-586BC). It is described in Jeremiah 1:2-3, that is from the 13th year of Josiah's reign till the 11th year of King Zedekiah's reign. In August of the 11th year, the people of Jerusalem were taken away as captives. The book of Jeremiah covers a very bad message from God through Jeremiah to the Jewish people due to their sins.

1) The Calling (verses 4 & 5)

a. God knew you before you were born

God's calling is not random or not planned. God "did his homework". He knew Jeremiah. In the same way God knew exactly who you are before you were born. God has the most comprehensive plan that contains details from beginning to end.

b. God has a plan for your life

The 2nd half of verse 5 stated "... before you were born I set you apart". God has a specific plan for each person, Jeremiah as well as you.

c. God has a specific time for your assignment

God approached Jeremiah at that specific time. God's timing is perfect.

2) The uncertainty (Verse 6)

Jeremiah's response is similar to most of us. Afraid and/or find excuse.

a. Man's perspective of inability

We often feel not adequate to handle the assignment. We measure what it would take and afraid to go forward because it might require more effort like training. Here, Jeremiah's problem is "the ability to speak", but he can be trained. God also can give him a special speaking ability after God called him.

b. Man's fear of unknown and rejection

We also afraid of unknown and rejection. Young people at that time will not be respected. Delivering bad news like Jeremiah would surely be rejected.

3) The Assurance (Verses 7-10, 17-19)

God makes His plan work. God will give you assurance and your need.

a. God is with you (eliminate the fear)

Verse 8 stated "... I am with you and will rescue you."

b. God tells you what to do and say (eliminate the inability)

Verse 9 stated "...I have put my words in your month." and thus eliminated Jeremiah's inability. God will equip you but you need to be willing to be trained. God will also guide you while you are doing the assignment.

c. God will protect you knowing there will be oppositions

Verses 17-19 give more assurance even there will be oppositions. Vs. 19 stated "They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you." Rejections and oppositions are common in assignments, and we must rely on God's promise to overcome (Phil. 4:13).

4) More details given in this case with two visions (Verses 11-16)

Vision 1 – Almond tree rod (vs 11). Almond tree is earliest bloom tree in spring among other trees there (called "awaken tree" in Hebrew). That implies be awake and ready. God will keep His word and act promptly (see vs. 12). The rod might symbolize punishment which soon be given to the people.

Vision 2- A boiling pot and it is in the north and pouring this way (vs 13). The message is for giving details (vs 14-16), and strengthening (vs 17-18).

God might or might not give you details or extra assurance in an assignment. Sometimes, God guide you step by step as you going through the assignment. Regardless, God will make it work out through you.

In conclusion, you learned how God is well planned and prepared before you are called to serve Him. You must be willing and follow God. Be confidence of His promise and protection. You can apply this when you serve Him in specific

spiritual mission. I can tell you my experience on mission trips. But today I want you to know this applies not just spiritual callings, but you can apply this to our work assignments also. All our occupations and work assignments are God allowed. We need to face those assignments in a proper way.

I give you my case as an example. I am an aerospace engineer, and I believe God has my life planned out including my occupation. I worked on satellite design for years. In one occasion, I was assigned to be the space environment monitor engineer in the satellite control room for a new set of satellites to be launched because I am an expert in space environment. Only about a couple of weeks before the launch, there is a vacancy in the satellite telemetry & command subsystem monitor position. My management has decided to put me to take two roles during the launch campaign. I had very limited knowledge in that area. I felt like inadequate and fear of unknown like Jeremiah because that is a very high responsibility. Mis-read telemetry or give wrong commands to satellites can damage or lose a satellite. Losing satellites can be very high cost to the company and would bring delay in technology for the nation. I prayed to God. I put my time to learn about it. At the time of launch, I have some assurance. I still continuously pray to God to guide me in each step. Finally, the satellites were successfully launched and became stable in orbit. My duty has been completed successfully. I believe similar steps as outlined above are applicable to your situation also.